Farming at the Top, Bottom, and Middle

By John F. Cowan

IN one of the poorest wards of Boston is a girl who has earned the sobriquet of "The Three-Story Farmer," otherwise, "Backyard Betsy." She began to till the soil growing flowers in boxes in the backyard of the tenement, for her invalid brother to look at. They were "halvers," that is, they rented only half the flat, and the back half at that, so Benny could not look out in the street. She made the little space so beautiful with green and bloom that the neighbors nicknamed her "Backyard Betsy," and began to imitate her example.

Next an Italian woman in the building showed her how to grow some vegetables in boxes under the windows, and on the roof, and she soon had a fine garden of tomatoes, peas, beans, and lettuce, from which she could tempt Benny's poor appetite with fresh, home-grown vegetables.

But Benny grew worse, and she found it necessary to stay at home with him more and more. They were so poor that the loss of her wages was a serious matter. One day a neighbor said to her—these tenement-house neighbors are wonderfully kind and thoughtful—"There's a way or raising mushrooms in the cellar. It doesn't take much except care. I could get you some of the spawn from my brother who is gardener for a rich man." And so "Backyard Betsy" became "Mushroom Nurse." She found a marketman who took all that she could grow, and soon she was able to make five dollars a month.

But Benny demanded more of her time, and she was hard pressed. One day the marketman told her of a customer of his who had inquired for some one to take care of a bird. She eagerly accepted the trust, and was well paid. She loved the bird, and studied its wants. A bird man told her it needed worms, and showed her how to breed them in bran. She had good success, and he took all the worms she could spare. So "Backyard Betsy," the "Mushroom Girl," became "Betsy," the Bird Girl, and the demand for worms for birds grew so that soon she was making enough money to stay at home all the time and care for Benny. It is doubtful if any farm so small was ever worked so thoroughly or profitably.

The Father of Waters

By Herbert Quick

THE extent to which the Mississippi valley in the United States speaks out in the description of its boundaries. Its Red River arm skirts all north Texas, and penetrates New Mexico. Colorado and Wyoming are reached from it by the Arkansas and the branches of the Missouri, while Montana, away up to Helena and Virginia City, is a child of Mississippi-Missouri navigation. North Dakota marks the contact of Mississippi drainage with that of the Saskatchewan, and through the Mouse River hints at the annexation of the Canadian waterways system to that of the Mississippi; while through the Red River of the North and the Minnesota, boats may sometimes pass without a canal from St. Paul to Winnepeg, and thence through many watery ways into the wheat fields.

Minnesota and Michigan, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio are scored with easy passages for canals from the basin of the great lakes to the Mississippi valley; all of them but Michigan are pierced by fine affluents of the great river; and as for Michigan, her ships now go to Joliet, a Mississippi valley port. The Chautauqua lake district in New York is in the Mississippi basin, and Pennsylvania and West Virginia send down the Ohio more Mississippi River traffic than any other states. Old Virginia sits with one foot on the Atlantic at Newport News, the other on Mississippi waters in the Clinch. Georgia pours out her historic Chickamauga into the Tennessee.

All the states within this splendid circle are scored and gridironed by thousands and thousands of waterways actually or potentially navigable; and of the forty-six states, only sixteen are to be left out of the Mississippi's roster. We need not think of sectionalism in speaking of the Mississippi. It is the nation's great asset in inland navigation. It must be the keystone of the arch of our waterways system, the backbone which must uphold our perfected transportation plan, the aorta of our ideal traffic circulation.—Reader Magazine.

Sensational Educators Condemned

By Andrew S. Draper,
New York State Commissioner of Education

SENSATIONALISM has no rights of any kind in a university. Yet we must have learned that it is not to be kept out by the saying. Novelty of theme or of statement, suited to exploitation and to personal notoriety, is as repugnant to the traditions, the philosophic basis, the moral sense, and the freedom of a university as illiteracy is a menace to government in a democratic state, or as greed is repugnant to fellowship in a philanthropic guild. One cannot be allowed to propagate his vagaries upon the time and in the name of a university that would like to be thought prudent and rational. If one wants to be a professor of myths and ghosts, he ought to go out in the woods and sit on a log and pursue his inquiries on his own time and in the most appropriate place. I have no valid objection to a professor being a free trader. I cannot object to his telling students the reason why. But I have abundant reason for objecting to his hiding from students the arguments which support the policy of protection, and to his enforcing his partisan view against mere youth with the ponderous solemnity of a military execution.

Art.

Word reached the sheriff at Columbus, Ind., that a wild girl appeared every morning in the altogether on the top of a high hill near town. He investigated and found that she was not a wild girl, but a tame girl, naked except for a garland of fig leaves, and that she was posing in the early morning for a picture to be called "Sunrise."

The story gravely concludes that the sheriff since the investigation has become a devotee of Art, and goes every morning to watch the artist at his work.—Atchison Globe.

Usual Testimonial.

"Mr. Grumbley writes, 'I don't see how you can have nerve to sell your worthless remedy for 50 cents a bottle.'"

"Oh, indeed! Well, strike out 'have nerve to,' and 'worthless,' and put the letter in our testimonials."—Judge.

Shining Examples.

"I started to tell my wife about a woman who made her own fall gown."

"Well?"

"She capped my story with one about a man who made a million dollars."—Washington Herald.

THE DREAM.

At noon, in the valley of far Daghestan,
With a ball in my breast I lay silent and stark,
While drop by drop, slowly, the red life-blood ran
From the still smoking wound that showed hollow and dark.

Alone I lay there on the bare sandy ground,
The fierce sun of noontide was scorching the steep
Brown crests of the mountains that hemmed me around,
And it fell on me, too—but I slept the death-sleep.

And I dreamt of my country; of revels by night,
Of halls that were brilliant with cressets aflame;
Of maidens whose chaplets of roses gleamed bright,
And amid their gay gossip I heard my own name.

But one of the maidens sits pensive apart,
Nor joins in the laughter; and God alone knows
What sinister fancies engulf her young heart,
So silent she sits while the revelry grows.

Does she see in her vision the corpse of a man
With a ball in his breast, lying silent and stark
At noon, in the valley of far Daghestan,
While the still smoking wound with his life-blood is dark?

—Michael Yourievich Lermontov, translated by Rosa Newmarch.

The Son of Big Mountain

By Franklin Welles Calkins

"My boy, I am going to leave you now to go on the other side of this hill. Look well to Plenty Boy till I get back. Remember, you are a Sans Arc and the son of Big Mountain."

Such, or something like it, was the daily admonition of Yellow Belt's mother during the berry-picking season. Among the rough lands of the Powderhorn, the red raspberry was wonderfully plenty. The Sans Arc women gathered great quantities, not only to meet the enormous daily capacity of their families, but to dry for future use.

The berry range extended on all sides of their village, so the women became scattered in all directions. The children were usually taken with their mothers, because a herd of them, left at the deserted teepees, were too likely to get into mischief. And older children were put to guard younger children, because they were of no account in picking berries.

Yellow Belt's case was very trying to a twelve-year-old boy. He had no sisters to relieve him, and his charge was a mischievous and freakish three-year-old child. However, the older brother was very faithful for a number of days. He kept one eye on Plenty Boy and the other on the lookout for small game.

Sometimes a chipmunk or a small bird came within reach of his blunt-end arrows, and the excitement of the affair would occupy his mind for a long time. And when a bush rabbit ran by, and was actually hit by one of two arrows, the lad elaborated a story which he carried home to his playfellows.

When there was no game to be seen Yellow Belt would divide his time in admiration of two war arrows which his uncle, Gray Bull, had given him, and which he did not trust himself to shoot among the bushes. One of these was somewhat worm-eaten in the shaft, and its iron teeth played loose on its rivet for want of real sinews to bind. The other had a bone tooth, and was not a weapon for the buffalo.

Yet these arrows and his confidence in them were to bring him out of the greatest adventure of his life, one which, after forty years, furnished him with his most thrilling tale of personal encounter.

On the day when his mother left him to go behind the big hill, she had spread her blanket for Plenty Boy, who was sound asleep. Yellow Belt did not mean to go to sleep when he lay beside the young one, but he had eaten to repletion, and despite some fighting, his drowsy eyes closed. He awoke because the sun had shifted so that its hot rays were beating directly upon his face. He rose, digging at his heavy, burning lids, and was reminded of his charge by hearing the voice of Plenty Boy, sounding faint and far away, but with a fierce accent which spoke of infantile wrath.

At first Yellow Belt believed that his mother had come and had carried Plenty Boy away as a rebuke to his own remissness, and that the child was angry at leaving him behind. Feeling very crestfallen, he gathered his bow and arrows and made his way among bushes and rocks at the foot of the ledge, toward the sound of Plenty Boy's scolding.

For some hundred steps or more he heard nothing of the small brother; then, nearer than he had expected, he heard the young voice in an explosive shout, repeated two or three times. Plenty Boy had evidently wandered off alone, and was shouting—as he often did at the village—at some crow, buzzard, or other live object which had attracted his attention.

Yellow Belt hurried along the face of the ledge, not daring to call, for it was a trick of the mischievous lad to scamper off and hide when any one was thus seeking him. So the elder boy ran softly forward, and turning an angle of the rocks, again heard the voice of the youngster scolding in sharp tones of infantile bravado:

"He-e-e! Ya-dra! Come—come down here, sunkila!"

So! the young brother was calling, and to a "little dog." Yellow Belt climbed to the top of a boulder, and looked about among the rocks and juniper bushes. The voice seemed to be coming out of the face of the ledge, and for a moment the lad stared in bewilderment at the bare rock walls.

Then a protruding bush betrayed a cleft near at hand, and its ledges, of seeming jointure, were, he knew, some steps apart. He hastened toward the half hidden opening, imagining that the small hunter must have cornered a rabbit in that niche. To Plenty Boy's mind all animals smaller than horses were dogs, and the horse, as to his elders, was a big, "mysterious dog," a sunka wakan tanka.

Yellow Belt hastened to peer in at the crevasse, and as he approached, his ears were startled by a rumbling growl that set his stiff black hair on end. He knew that voice—the threat of ignu hanska, the long yellow cat of the mountains,—knew it for the good reason that there was, at that moment, one partly tamed, a prisoner at the Sans Arc village.

"Ho, good-for-nothing! Bad—bad—bad!" yelled the small brother, angrily.

With his knees knocking, Yellow Belt strung his bow, fitted an arrow, and stepped softly into the crevasse.

The sight which met his eyes might well have appalled the heart even of his father, the chief, Big Mountain.

The youngest scion of the family, breech-clouted, but otherwise naked, was standing erect and defiant, sturdily confronting a big cougar and her young, insisting, as he angrily stamped his feet, that the sunkilas come down and play with him!

As he shook his fist at them, he leaned backward—so close he was to the face of rock upon which they were perching—and the belt of his clout leggings creased his fat sides in double folds.

Yellow Belt saw all this at a glance, and by his native instinct fully understood what had happened.

The little brother, wandering along the face of the ledge, had come upon the tiny spotted kits, got accidentally between them and the mouth of their lair, and had followed them into this notch.

The old one, prowling upon the top of the ledge, had heard her young ones' distressed mewings, and had descended a scarp which they were unable to climb.

The snarling old beast, her kits almost within reach of Plenty Boy, was waiting to pounce upon the intruder should it become necessary to protect her young.

Yellow Belt was frightened enough; for the moment his legs shook so that he could hardly stand. He called softly to Plenty Boy, hoping to coax him away. But his words were of no avail. The little lad had his eyes glued upon the spotted kits, and the desire to play with them was the only emotion his infantile mind could hold.

He answered the brother's entreaty by a forward movement and angry whoops at the kits.

And why was this tiny Sans Arc not afraid of the mother?

Yellow Belt knew too well it was because of the big mountain-cat which Lone Elk kept in a stake teepee, fastened with a white man's iron rope, and at which creature, snarling impatiently, little villagers at home were wont to launch their puerile defiances.

Yellow Belt's legs were yet weak and his teeth clicked with fear, as he stepped cautiously toward the fierce old cat, now snarling down, her muzzle within three arms' length of Plenty Boy's face. He knew better than to call again to the sturdy urchin.

He sought to attract the angry beast's attention to himself. He remembered his mother's parting charge, and grew braver. Holding bow and fixed arrow in one hand, he clenched the other and beat his breast as he advanced.

"Ho! Look at me, ignu hanska!" he shouted. "I am the son of a chief, Big Mountain. I do not fear you!"

Then, as the old cat seemed to draw back against the rocks, he took fresh courage. "Ho! ho!" he whooped. "See, I will send an arrow through your body!"

The sound of his own voice greatly heartened him, but so also it emboldened Plenty Boy, who now tiptoed against the rocks and beat his tiny fists against their hard surface as he renewed his shouts to the "little dogs" to come down.

Within six paces of the glaring cougar Yellow Belt halted. Should he drop his weapons, leap forward, snatch Plenty Boy and run? This he was about to do, when the remembered counsel of old hunters restrained him. "When in close quarters you must never run from ignu hanska or from mato-hota, the grizzly, for then they are sure to attack. You must always face them warily, weapons in hand." Such was the wisdom of the elder hunters, and the boy heeded.

He took another step forward, and now the two lower kits, with barely space to cling against the rock, began to crowd each other for safer and higher footing. One of them shoved the other nearly off its perch, and this one made a desperate scramble to reach the dam above. For a moment the kit fought, then lost its footing, and rolled to the feet of Plenty Boy, who pounced upon it with a cry of delight.

And now the big cat, glaring with open mouth, crouched for a spring, and Yellow Belt leaped toward her and let fly his arrow with the iron tooth. Straight at the muzzle of the beast he shot, and his shaft entered her red and gaping maw and stuck in the cougar's throat. With a growl of rage, ignu hanska leaped from her perch.

She launched herself at the daring boy, striking him upon the chest, and together they rolled upon the rocks. Thinking his last moment was at hand, Yellow Belt fought desperately.

He somehow got to his feet, and his surprise was equal to his fright when he saw the great yellow beast rolling in agony. At a glance he saw that his arrow had entered her throat and stuck, that a blow from her paw had snapped the shaft, and the iron tooth was wedged fast, holding her jaws wide apart. In vain she strove to tear out the offending weapon. She rolled to and fro, uttering hoarse chest notes and tearing at her mouth until her jaws ran red with blood.

The animal was crazed with pain, oblivious of everything else as she fought to rid herself of the weapon. Plenty Boy, sprawling at the foot of the ledge, fiercely scratched by the small beast, which had already fled, was howling lustily.

Yellow Belt gave the youngster but a glance to note that he was not seriously hurt; then, fitting his bone-toothed arrow, he circled warily about the fighting cat, watching his opportunity for a deadly shot.

It came at last. At three paces he launched his arrow, burying its tooth behind the old beast's shoulder. A truer shot and straighter to the heart no hunter could have made. In a moment all was over, and the long cat lay stricken dead at his feet; and for several minutes thereafter the rocks rang with his exultant whoops of victory.

While he was still shouting, his mother found him and saw what he had done. She caught her youngest, still screaming with pain, into her arms and examined his hurts.

Finding nothing to alarm, she turned to the exulting son of Big Mountain and said:

"My boy, you have indeed done well."—Youth's Companion.

Kingdom of Uganda.

The kingdom of Uganda is a fairy tale. You climb up a railway instead of a beanstalk, and at the end there is a wonderful new world. The scenery is different, the vegetation is different, the climate is different, and, most of all, the people are different from anything elsewhere to be seen in the whole range of Africa. Instead of the breezy uplands, we enter a tropical garden. In place of naked, painted savages, clashing their spears and gibbering i chorus to their tribal chiefs, a complete and elaborate polity is presented. Under a dynastic king, a parliament, and a powerful feudal system, an amiable, clothed, polite, and intelligent race dwell together in an organized monarchy upon the rich domain between the Victoria and Albert Lakes.—Strand Magazine.

A Parallel Case.

In the late financial stringency a clerk in one of the New York banks was trying to explain to a stolid old Dutchman why the bank could not pay cash to depositors as formerly, and was insisting that he be satisfied with clearing house checks. But the old German could not grasp the situation, and finally the president of the bank was called upon to enlighten the dissatisfied customer. After a detailed explanation of the financial situation, the president concluded, "Now my good man, you understand, don't you?"

"Yes," dubiously replied the Dutchman, "I think I understand. It's just like dis: ven my baby vakes up in der night and cries for milk I give her a milk-ticket."—Harper's Weekly.

The German soldier must be an expert swimmer.